

THE
PRIESTHOOD
OF
GOD

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International Ministries

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Bracketed comments following some scriptures assist the reader in understanding the intended meaning of these verses

We acknowledge the additional works of the various Scholars and Bible Commentaries used in conjunction with the College material. This is not to say that we agree with all their theology, but we certainly value their contribution to the Body of Christ.

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THE PRIESTHOOD OF GOD

AN EVERLASTING PRIESTHOOD

Background Reading: Hebrews Chapter 7

You may ask, “Has the Priesthood also passed away?” Let’s examine God’s Word on this subject.

HEBREWS 2:17 Wherefore in all things it behoved (was necessary for) Him (Jesus) to be made like unto His brethren (in every respect), that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God (as our High Priest, He is our Representative to God, which He could be by becoming a Man and going to the Cross as well, which He did : E.S.B.), to make reconciliation for the sins of the people (to make an atoning Sacrifice in order to regain the favour and goodwill of God on behalf of the human race). (E.S.B.)

HEBREWS 3:1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling (pertains to all Christians), consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

HEBREWS 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, Who is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. (Let us hold fast to Christ and the Cross, which was necessary for our Lord to be our High Priest) (E.S.B.)

Notice it says, “Seeing then that we have (this is present tense) a great High Priest . . . let us hold fast to our profession (our confession of faith in Him).”

HEBREWS 4:15 For we have not an High Priest Who cannot be touched with the feeling of our

infirmities (as a man, having empathy for our weaknesses); but was in all points (in every respect) tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

HEBREWS 4:16 *Let us therefore come boldly (confidently) unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

It is only because we have a High Priest, seated at the right hand of the Father, that we can come boldly to “*the throne of grace.*”

It is only through Christ Jesus that we can obtain mercy and find grace to help us in our times of need.

“ . . . As our High Priest, He functions as the Mediator between God and man. . . ”

As our High Priest, He functions as the Mediator between God and man. If this was not so, we would have no hope, and no assurance of salvation - but praise God we do have this hope, because Jesus has risen and conquered death and is now our eternal High Priest. Therefore it is obvious that the Priesthood has not passed away, but once again, has been fulfilled in Christ.

HEBREWS 6:19 *Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which enters into that (the inner sanctuary) within the veil (behind the curtain);*

HEBREWS 6:20 *Whither the forerunner is for us entered (has entered on our behalf), even Jesus (alludes to the High Priest on the Day of Atonement entering the Holy of Holies), made an High Priest for ever after (in) the order of Melchizedek.*

Thus Jesus is described as:

“a High Priest forever, after (in) the order of Melchizedek”

And Hebrews 7:1 tells us concerning Melchizedek:

HEBREWS 7:1 For this Melchizedek, King of Salem (Jerusalem), Priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter (defeat) of the kings, and blessed him (Genesis 14:14-15);

“The order of Melchizedek” is intriguing because this priestly order is eternal and was established well before the Levitical Priesthood even came into existence.

“. . . “The order of Melchizedek” is intriguing because this priestly order is eternal and was established well before the Levitical Priesthood even came into existence. . . ”

The Levitical Priesthood came from Abraham’s descendants and was entered through inheritance. As we know, the thirteen tribes of Israel originated from Abraham’s grandson, Jacob, who was later named Israel. The men from the tribe of Levi were called aside by God to be His ministers and to serve in the Tabernacle, and later the Temple. It was, however, only Levites descended from Aaron who actually became priests. Therefore this Priesthood is more correctly termed “the Aaronic Priesthood.” The other members of the Levite tribe were also called to be set aside as God’s gift to the Aaronic Priesthood, to assist the priests with all the work of the Tabernacle. These men performed many and various functions apart from actually being priests. The priestly duties were strictly limited to Aaron and his descendants on pain of death (Numbers 18:2-3).

NUMBERS 18:6 And I (God), behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of

Israel: to you they are given as a gift for (from) the Lord, to do (help with) the service of the Tabernacle of the congregation.

NUMBERS 18:7 Therefore you (Aaron) and your sons (descendants) with you shall keep your priest's office for every thing of the Altar (Brazen Altar), and within the veil (concealing the Ark of the Covenant); and you shall serve: I have given your priest's office unto you as a service of gift: and the stranger (any non Levite) who comes nigh shall be put to death.

Thus there were actually three classes of Levite:

1. The High Priest who came from the family lineage of Aaron (Moses' brother) belonged to the Aaronic Priesthood. The High Priest had the most sacred duty of being the mediator between God and man in the offering of the annual blood sacrifices for the sins of the people on the Day of Atonement. He also performed various other duties and taught the people God's Word (Numbers 18:1, 2, 7).

2. The priests who performed other blood sacrifices in the Tabernacle and later on, the Temple, also instructed God's people in His Word. The priests all came from the Aaronic line.

3. Ordinary Levites who were not directly involved in the blood sacrifices and other ceremonial duties, assisted the priests in their day-to-day duties and helped instruct God's people in His Word. In the days of the Tabernacle, they were responsible for setting it up, taking it down and carrying it, cleaning it and making necessary repairs. When the Temple was built, the Levites also attended to the care of the storehouses and treasuries, and keeping track of donations and gifts. The ordinary Levites also supervised the observance of religious laws and sometimes acted as judges in disputes. There were also Levite porters, musicians and singers who supported the priests (Numbers 18:6).

Note: The Levite duties were specified according to whether a particular Levite was descended from Kohath, Gershon or Merari, the three sons of Levi (Numbers Ch.4). The Levites were supervised in their duties by the Aaronic Priesthood. The Aaronic line was descended from Kohath.

This was how the Levitical system which included the Aaronic Priesthood, called after the order of Aaron, was established.

The Priesthood of Melchizedek, however, is superior to that of Levi because it was entered through Divine appointment, and is eternal in nature.

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Melchizedek enters the Biblical account in Genesis 14:18, meeting with Abraham after his great victory against the Canaanite King Chedorlaomer who had captured his nephew Lot and many others. Melchizedek is introduced as the King of Salem, an ancient name for Jerusalem. He brings with him “*bread and wine*,” which are symbolic of the Body and Blood of the Lord, proclaimed at the Last Supper. Melchizedek is also “*Priest of the Most High God*” (Genesis 14:18), and his name means not only “*King of Righteousness*” but also “*King of Peace*” (Salem) (Hebrews 7:2). As such, he is a type-pattern of Christ.

David spoke of Melchizedek 1,000 years after Abraham:

***PSALM 110:4 The Lord has sworn, and will not
repent, You (Christ) are a priest for ever after the
order of Melchizedek.***

Why was Jesus identified with the Priesthood of Melchizedek and not the Priesthood of Aaron, High Priest of Israel? The reason is that the Aaronic Priesthood was only ever meant to be temporal or temporary, whereas the Priesthood of Melchizedek is eternal. Aaron was an Israelite and represented only Israel, while Melchizedek was a Gentile and represents all of mankind.

GENESIS 14:19 And he (Melchizedek) blessed him (Abraham), and said, “Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth:

GENESIS 14:20 And blessed be the Most High God, Who has delivered your (Abraham’s) enemies into your hand. And he (Abraham) gave him (Melchizedek) tithes of all.

Here we find that Melchizedek blessed Abraham, and received the payment of the tithe from Abraham. This incidentally is the first Biblical record of tithing, and demonstrates that tithing preceded the Law of Moses. Thus tithing predated the Law and is meant to continue today as the means by which the church provides for its ministers who carry out the Lord’s work.

The giving of the tithes shows that Melchizedek stood in a position of greater authority than Abraham. He was, in essence, a type-pattern of Christ in His High Priesthood. And if Abraham the Patriarch of Israel presented tithes to Melchizedek, we can see “*how great this man was*” (Hebrews 7:4), at least in God’s eyes.

“ . . . Aaron was an Israelite and represented only Israel, while Melchizedek was a Gentile and represents all of mankind. . . ”

Concerning Melchizedek we find the writer of Hebrews stating:

HEBREWS 7:3 Without father, without mother (only means that there was no record made of the name of his father, or mother, or any of his posterity), without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life (means the Holy Spirit intended Melchizedek to be without genealogy, in order that he may serve as the Type); but made like unto the Son of God (actually says, "to be likened to the Son of God"); abides a priest continually. (This refers to Christ of Whom Melchizedek was a Type.) (E.S.B.)

Melchizedek was not eternal but his type was eternal and is carried on in Christ. He was a man and he lived and died, and is in heaven today. But the Word reveals to us that his role and office is of a higher rank than Abraham, the father of all who believe. As such, the writer of Hebrews shows that the Priesthood of Melchizedek is far superior to the Priesthood of Aaron. (And the New Covenant is far superior to the Old Covenant, as the writer of Hebrews also sets out to establish. The Jewish people, and Levi, yet to proceed from the Patriarch Abraham, paid tithes through Him to Melchizedek. Thus the Jewish system is secondary to Christ).

HEBREWS 7:2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all (this is the first mention of tithing in the Bible); first being by interpretation King of Righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of Peace;

HEBREWS 7:4 Now consider how great this man (he was not an angel as some think) was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils (presents Melchizedek as being in a superior spiritual position).

As we have stated, both Christ and Melchizedek are kings of righteousness and kings of peace. Secondly, both are members of a unique Priesthood which does not depend on family lineage. As we have learned, the priestly order of Melchizedek was confirmed by Divine appointment whereas the Levitical Priesthood was entered by Divinely ordered succession. The Melchizedekian Priesthood is of an unchangeable and permanent nature, where this was not the case with the Priesthood from the tribe of Levi - which was temporary and thus secondary.

***“ . . .the priestly order of Melchizedek
was confirmed by Divine appointment
whereas the Levitical Priesthood was
entered by Divinely ordered
succession. . .”***

Today, Jesus is our High Priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.

HEBREWS 5:5 So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest (proclaims the fact that this was no personal ambition on the Messiah's part that resulted in Him becoming a High Priest, but rather the fact that God called Him to that position : E.S.B.); but (it was) He (God) Who said unto Him, “You are My Son, to day have I begotten You” (become Your Father - speaks of the Plan of God, made in heaven to redeem mankind [Psalm 2:7]).

HEBREWS 5:6 As He said also in another place (Psalm 110:4), “You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.”

Thus the Priesthood is still in existence today. If this was not so, Jesus would not be our High Priest seated at the right hand of

the Father, as the scriptures clearly state. And if Jesus was not our High Priest, we would have no access to the Father.

GOD’S PRIESTHOOD TODAY

Background Reading: 1 Peter 2:1-9

The Priesthood has not passed away on earth or in heaven, for we as Christians are all part of it, as Revelation 1:5-6 declares:

REVELATION 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, Who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten (the firstborn) of the dead (refers to His Resurrection), and the prince (ruler) of the kings of the earth. Unto Him Who loved us, and washed us from our sins in (by) His own Blood,

REVELATION 1:6 And has made us a kingdom and (of) priests unto (to serve) God and His Father (His God and Father); to Him be glory and dominion (power) for ever and ever. Amen.

“has made us a kingdom and (of) priests”

This scripture reminds us of Exodus 19:6, “*And you shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests.*” What a privilege has been given to those in Christ.

Note: The Authorized Version (K.J.V.) translates this verse as “kings and priests.” But the older manuscripts read “*a kingdom and priests.*” Therefore, one could read it also as: “Who constituted us a kingdom, priests to His God.”

Wiersbe writes “*God’s purpose for the nation of Israel was that they be a “**kingdom of priests** and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:6), but they failed God and lost their spiritual privileges. Those privileges are now enjoyed by the church, for the New Testament says that we are “a holy priesthood... a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation... ” and “a **kingdom of priests**” (1 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 1:6).*

*Under the old covenant, God's people had a priesthood; but in the new covenant, God's people are a priesthood. "The priesthood of the believer" is a precious article of the Christian faith, the defense of which has cost many a life. It means that all believers have the same acceptance before God and enjoy equal access to God through Jesus Christ, the Great High Priest."*¹
(underlines added)

"...Under the old covenant, God's people had a priesthood; but in the new covenant, God's people are a priesthood..."

The word "**kingdom**" describes the body of the Redeemed collectively and the word "**priests**" indicates the position of the individuals in this group. This is because in the Kingdom of God, each Believer is a priest. We see this point brought out again later in the Book of Revelation:

REVELATION 5:9 . . . for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your Blood out of every kindred (tribe), and tongue, and people and nation.

REVELATION 5:10 And have made us (Christians) unto our God a kingdom and (of) priests: and we shall reign on the earth (help Christ rule during the time of the Millennial Kingdom).

As we have said, this privilege of being a kingdom of priests was actually promised to the nation of Israel if they would obey the Lord and keep His Covenant:

EXODUS 19:5 Now therefore, if you will obey My voice indeed, and keep My Covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine:

EXODUS 19:6 And you shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which you (Moses) shall speak unto the children of Israel (the chosen people).

The priestly office of the Christian, however, is not a position of promise to be obtained through works - it is a birthright to those in Christ! We enter into this position when we receive redemption through the Blood of Christ. (But whether or not we take advantage of this aspect of our birthright is completely up to us!)

“. . .The priestly office of the Christian, however, is not a position of promise to be obtained through works - it is a birthright to those in Christ. . .”

In the Old Covenant Priesthood, only the high priest had direct access to God via the Holy of Holies. Today, because Christ has fulfilled all the sacrificial offerings in His Atonement, no more blood is required. Therefore “in Christ” as believer-priests we have the ongoing prerogative and privilege of being able to enter the heavenly Holy of Holies, by faith, day by day, according to the grace of God, via the Blood of Jesus. In order to do this, all sin must be put under the Blood, both known sin and unknown sin. This is a condition of our entry into the presence of our holy God. But access to the throneroom is a treasured part of the inheritance of the royal Priesthood, and is available to all. We can therefore know that the distinctive characteristic of our priestly position is direct access to God. This access is universal and available at any time - provided we do not try to enter unworthily, for sin in a believer’s life will frustrate the grace of God and prevent entry to the throneroom.

The functions of the priestly office include the offering of a fourfold sacrifice:

1. One's own living body (Romans 12:1)
2. Praise to God (Hebrews 13:15)
3. One's substance (Galatians 6:6-10)
4. One's service (Hebrews 13:16; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20)

The priestly office also includes the function of intercession, for we are to intercede on behalf of others before the throne of God (James 5:16, Colossians 4:12). We are also to exhort one another to truth, and to lift one another up in the faith (Hebrews 10:24-25).

The added dimension which distinguishes our priestly role from that of the Old Covenant priests is that we are also to declare the Gospel. While the duties of the priests in the Old Covenant involved the teaching of God's Laws and principles to their own people, nowhere were they commanded to teach other nations the commandments of God. The responsibility to evangelize, however, is one of our priestly duties. And we now have the ability through the new birth and the Holy Spirit's empowerment to effectively share the Gospel with others, according to the Great Commission. This is both our privilege and our sacred duty.

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Great Commission. . . ”***

The functions involved in our priestly office can thus be condensed into two major tasks.

1. The first task is concerned with our fellowship and walk with the Father as we offer up spiritual sacrifices (offerings of praise and works of righteousness) to God.

1 PETER 2:5 You also, as lively (living) stones, are built up (into) a spiritual house (refers to the Body of Christ, all born-again Believers), (to be) an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices (offered in faith and love), acceptable to God by (through) Jesus Christ.

This is the vertical aspect of our priestly role.

Note: Only from the vantage point of knowing God's Word and having faith in that very Word can we truly offer up these spiritual sacrifices - praising God and performing works of righteousness. In other words, we cannot offer up these sacrifices in a way that is acceptable to God unless we are yielded to His will and empowered by Him to do so. Otherwise they would not be "spiritual" sacrifices.

JOHN 4:23 But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit (by the inner man) and in truth (with faith): for the Father seeks such to worship Him

JOHN 4:24 God is a Spirit (simply means that "God is a Spirit Being"): and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth (man worships the Lord through and by his personal spirit, which is moved upon by the Holy Spirit; otherwise it is not worship which God will accept). (E.S.B.)

2. The second task is to show forth the excellence of Him Who has called us out of darkness into His wonderful light, by declaring His Gospel of love to the world.

1 PETER 2:9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal (kingly) priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people (each Believer uniquely belongs to God); that you should show forth (declare) the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light

This is the horizontal aspect of our priestly role.

So our priestly order is both royal and holy, and our priestly duties are displayed through our actions of faith and love concerning both the Father and the world.

We can see indeed that God's priestly order is still in existence today, and that Jesus is our great High Priest, the eternal Mediator between God and man.

LEVELS OF AUTHORITY WITHIN THE PRIESTHOOD

Background Reading: Ephesians 4:1-16

Jesus, as our High Priest, has supreme authority over everyone and everything. Just as His Name is superior to all others (Acts 4:12; Philippians 2:9-11), He has been given a position of authority higher than anyone else. Indeed Jesus has been given authority over everything in heaven and on earth (Philippians 2:9-11; Matthew 28:18). And Jesus has delegated His authority to us as Christians.

However, while we are all equal spiritually, we are not all equal in levels of authority. An example of this is seen in the authority God has invested in the Five Fold Ministry.

***“...while we are all equal spiritually, we
are not all equal in levels of
authority. . .”***

Some Christians are called into Five Fold Ministry positions (and these callings were given by God before the foundation of the earth - 2 Timothy 1:9; Ephesians 2:10). Such people may answer their callings and prepare themselves accordingly until God, not man, places them in positions of authority within the Body of Christ, e.g. Ephesians 4:11. Therefore, within the church, it is fitting that we respect the people whom God has placed in authority over us. We should also submit to their authority within the boundaries of the Word of God, as Hebrews 13:17 tells us:

HEBREWS 13:17 Obey your spiritual leaders and submit to them (in the Lord) - [continually recognizing their authority over you], for they are constantly keeping watch over your souls and guarding your spiritual welfare, as men who will have to render an account [of their trust]. [Do your part to] let them do this with gladness, and not with sighing and groaning, for that would not be profitable to you [either]. (Amp.)

Another versions reads:

HEBREWS 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you (has reference to Pastors; however, the emphasis is not on the Pastor, but rather on the Gospel he Preaches), and submit yourselves (refers to submitting to the True Gospel that is being Preached by True Pastors): for they watch for your souls (refers to Preachers who truly have the spiritual welfare of the people at heart), as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief (every Preacher will give account to God for His Ministry):

for that is unprofitable for you. (If people will not heed the true Gospel being Preached, the Gospel will be of no profit to these particular individuals, whomever they might be, no matter how profitable it is to others. This brings “grief” to the True Preacher.) (E.S.B.)

We notice from this verse that people such as Pastors who hold positions of authority will also have a much greater degree of responsibility and accountability to God. He places Pastors and Teachers in positions of influence, and requires them to use this influence wisely, to nurture and care for the flock. (And notice that if a leader stumbles and falls, hundreds or even thousands may follow.) This principle of greater responsibility is also highlighted in James 3:1 which addresses Teachers of the Word:

JAMES 3:1 My Brethren, be not many masters (should have been translated, “be not many Teachers”), ***knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.*** (This refers to the fact that mishandling the Word of God will ultimately bring one tremendous problems. God holds the Teacher more responsible than the student.) (E.S.B.)

We should also remember the principle contained in Luke 12:48:

LUKE 12:48 . . . For unto whomsoever much is given (e.g. opportunity, giftings, abilities), ***of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.***

Those who are placed by God in particular positions of authority have, potentially, what is needed to fulfill these positions. And God does not commission someone to do a work unless they are first equipped to be able to perform, in the right timing, the tasks set before them by God.

Those who have positions of authority within the Body of Christ are, however, to be servants of the people and are not to try and dominate or control them. They are to minister to them - to serve them in the power of love.

“...Those who have positions of authority within the Body of Christ are, however, to be servants of the people and are not to try and dominate or control them. . .”

When Jesus washed the Disciples’ feet at the Last Supper, He showed that He had not come to be served but to serve - and His example was intended for us to follow. He, as a leader, emphasized this point.

MATTHEW 20:25 But Jesus called them (His 12 Disciples) unto Him, and said, “You know that the princes (rulers) of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them (gives the example of secular authority).

MATTHEW 20:26 But it shall not be so among you (then contrasts it to spiritual authority): but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister (servant);

MATTHEW 20:27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

MATTHEW 20:28 Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister (serve others), and to give His life a ransom for many (Jesus here speaks of His ultimate mission which took Him to the Cross).”

Through these scriptures Jesus was teaching that the higher the position one holds in the Body of Christ, the more of a servant one must become. There can be no greater example of this than that of our Lord Jesus Christ laying down His life for us.

FULFILLING OUR CALLING

If we are to be effective and fruitful it is important, as Christians, that we seek the Lord in order to discover what position He has called each of us to - whether this be a Five Fold Ministry position, a ministry concerned with healing or helps, etc. (1 Corinthians 12:28), a musician's ministry, or simply the ministry of reconciliation (sharing Jesus). Once we discover God's will in this matter, we should prepare ourselves accordingly, so that we may fulfill our calling. We may even be called to a particular position within the secular world. We should serve Christ in this capacity and see our work as being unto the Lord, e.g. Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22-24. Whatever we are called to do, we should do it with all our heart, knowing that each position is important for the proper functioning of the Priesthood of Believers. Also, each position brings its rewards - for those who obey God in faith and love. Remember that reward will not be based on our level of authority but on our obedience to the Lord - and this includes the way we respond to our calling.

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Some try to enter into positions (e.g. that of a Pastor or a Teacher) they are not called to. In this way they miss God's

perfect will for their lives and also, as a consequence, hinder the proper functioning of the Body of Christ. This can be quite a serious matter, particularly concerning those to whom they are ministering, perhaps inappropriately or ineffectively. Others, through fear, ignorance or selfishness, may reject God's call on their lives and so never fulfill what the Lord has for them. In this case, their potential is never realized, and frustration and dissatisfaction can often be the result.

So let us seek God's will for our life, and discover our calling in God. Let us then prepare ourselves to enter into our calling, so that we may be effective servants within the royal Priesthood.

Let us now look at Romans Ch.12 where Paul is speaking in regard to some of the priestly roles within the Body of Christ:

ROMANS 12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God has dealt (given) to every man (in Christ) the measure of faith (to fulfill his calling).

ROMANS 12:4 For as we have many members in one body (the Body of Christ), and all members have not the same office (function):

ROMANS 12:5 So we, being many, are (form) one body in Christ, and every one members (each belongs) one of another (to all the others).

ROMANS 12:6 Having then gifts (different giftings, different offices) differing according to the grace that is given to us (let us then each exercise them accordingly), whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of (our) faith;

ROMANS 12:7 Or ministry (one who serves), let us wait on our ministering (serving): or he who teaches, on teaching (carries the same idea; it is a wise man

who stays within the sphere of service for which God, the Holy Spirit, has fitted him, and does not invade some other field of service for which he is not fitted);
(E.S.B.)

ROMANS 12:8 Or he who exhorts, on exhortation: he who gives (presented here as a “gifting”), let him do it with simplicity; he who rules (governs, has a position of authority), with diligence; he who shows mercy (another “gifting”), with cheerfulness.

So we should be concerned with developing ourselves, with God’s help, in relation to our own calling, and not try to go beyond the authority of that calling. For example, if we are not called to the office of a Pastor or Teacher etc., we should not try to step into such a role - for a special Anointing is required for these ministry positions, and only those called have this potential and promise. The members of the Body of Christ need to work together in unity so that it can be effective here on earth, and God has ordained a structure within the Priesthood to help establish order and enable His people to fulfill their purpose. Therefore we need to seek God’s leading for our lives in order to discover our individual callings.

“. . . So we should be concerned with developing ourselves, with God’s help, in relation to our own calling, and not try to go beyond the authority of that calling. . . ”

We need then to prepare ourselves so that we may be accounted worthy by God to stand in our calling by the power of the Spirit. In this way we can bring maximum benefit to the Body of Christ, and fulfill the purpose God has for each of us for the Kingdom’s sake.

This principle of preparation should be applied to any work or ministry. All we do must be done to please God, and should be done according to the faith (belief and trust) given by Him as we flow in the energies and graces of God's Divine Nature. Using this faith, we will then flow in perfect unity with Him Who has saved us - not only from death but also from our own fruitless works which would lead only to frustration and defeat. But whatever we do, let it all be done by God's grace at work in and through us. Then we can say, "Thank You God for Christ, and the power of His Spirit which works the works of faith in me. Praise His Holy Name. Amen."

We need to understand that the more mature we are in Christ, the greater will be our dependence on Him, for without Him we can do nothing of any eternal value (John 15:5). Therefore we need to seek His leading and empowerment in all things, daily going to the throneroom to ask for grace to fight the fight of faith. Only then will we negate the ever-present peril of self-rule - and cease from struggling in the flesh to do works that lack God's approval and so empowerment!

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With this attitude and lifestyle, we will check everything we put our hands to, from what we should do to how we should do it. Everything needs God's approval and blessing. So many Christians have a great idea or see a need, then try to "make it happen" in the flesh without any real consultation or approval, let alone empowerment, to do that which they have thought of. We cannot just do what we think or desire, and then ask the Lord to bless our performance. In all things we need to acknowledge Him, desiring His will in everything and seeking His way. With this Godly perspective, let us always go back to the Cross to obtain a proper focus. Let us purpose to die to self so we can do

as Christ instructed us, which is to take up our cross of self-denial and follow Him in the power of the new life.

May you have the victory in Christ.

For further information or teaching material to help you grow in the Christian faith, please visit:

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1 Wiersbe, W.W., Be What You Are.

*"We have a vision
to see people living
in abundant life
by the power of God
through Jesus Christ"*



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